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Inquiries Explore Legalities of U.S.-Marcos Ties

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WASHINGTON, March 26 — During the long presidency of Ferdinand E. Marcos, his associates made continuing efforts to strengthen Philippine business and political ties in the United States. These efforts are now the subject of investigations in the Philippines and in the United States.

But there is little, if any, evidence that American laws may have been broken, according to Federal law enforcement officials. And in some cases the efforts by Marcos associates to strengthen ties in the United States were not even successful.

Two Marcos associates did have relationships with former officials of the Central Intelligence Agency, according to American and Philippine officials. In addition, Richard V. Allen, briefly the national security adviser to President Reagan, said that after he left the White House, he had talks with Philippine officials about political and

business matters, but that no agreements resulted from the discussions.

Earlier this month, an anonymous group of bankers provided a letter to the Philippine commission investigating the Marcos family wealth that asserted that there had been a plan by Mr. Marcos to gain favor with Republicans in the United States through campaign contributions and the establishing of business relationships.

No Evidence of Plan

The letter, forwarded to the commission by Antonio Gatmaitan, who used to head a Manila bank, contained no substantiation or documentation. But the Philippine commission said it would pursue some of the leads.

Subsequently, the Asian and Pacific Affairs subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, acting largely in response to the Manila letter, voted unanimously to subpoena four Marcos associates, including the son-in-law of the former President, Gregorio Araneta Jr., according to subcommittee documents.

Mr. Allen said that he had discussions in 1984 with Mr. Araneta and others about helping Philippine Air Lines obtain additional landing rights in the United States, but that no agreement was ever reached. Mr. Allen said he also had a number of political discussions in 1983 and 1984 with Mr. Marcos and his aides.

"Adrian Cristobal, a Marcos aide, came to see me in 1983, just to talk about American-Filipino relations," said Mr. Allen, whose office is in Washington. He added, "He talked to people all over town, we never talked about money."

Meets Marcos Aide

Mr. Allen said he had been introduced to Mr. Araneta by Kent B. Crane, a former Central Intelligence Agency official who also had worked as a foreign policy adviser to Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.

On March 24, 1984, Mr. Crane and others met with Gen. Fabian C. Ver, then Chief of Staff of the Philippine Armed Forces, in an attempt to help sell communications equipment to the Philippine military with the financial backing of the United States, according to Mr. Crane and notes from the meet-

ing. Mr. Araneta was at the meeting. But according to Mr. Crane, he was not part of the deal.

Although Mr. Crane held meetings with White House and Pentagon officials about the proposed sale, according to Mr. Crane and Administration officials, the deal did not take place.

Another former C.I.A. official, Herbert Natzke, went to work for a Marcos associate after he completed his term in 1979 as C.I.A. station chief in Manila, according to former and present American officials. Mr. Natzke works in San Francisco at the Oceanic Bank, which is owned by Lucio Tan, a Manila businessman and associate of Mr. Marcos, according to associates of Mr. Natzke.

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Mr. Natzke did not return a telephone message left by a reporter with his secretary. Mr. Tan is one of the four people the subcommittee voted to subpoena. The others, according to subcommittee documents, are Benjamin T. Romualdez, the former Philippine Ambassador to the United States, and Herminio T. Disini, a businessman and distant relative of Mr. Marcos.

The Justice Department has been examining documents brought to Hawaii by Mr. Marcos to see whether any campaign laws were broken, including the law barring donations to American

campaigns by foreign nationals. Three documents suggested a link between Marcos Government funds, a San Francisco supporter of Mr. Marcos, and a plan to contribute \$175,000 to candidates in the United States, mostly in California.

The American supporter, Dr. Leonilo Malabed, said, however, that the tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions he made came from his own personal funds. In addition, a Justice Department official said the time frame of the plan, 1979 to 1982, was beyond the three-year statute of limitations for violations of Federal campaign laws.

Some efforts in the past by Marcos associates to make high level contacts in the United States were not a total success. In December 1981, a reception for Imelda Marcos was held in Washington, in the hope of attracting top political officials, including Vice President Bush, according to documents. But, according to Mr. Bush's office, he did not attend the reception.

Finally, a group close to Mr. Marcos hired the politically well connected consulting firm of Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelley late last year in an attempt to improve Mr. Marcos's image in the United States. The group withdrew from the account shortly before Mr. Marcos fled Manila.

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